FREE
TYCI
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BARBARA KRUGER

Words by Elena Dolcini

Your body is a battleground. How many of us can say they have never heard this slogan before? For those who happen not to be aware of that, these are the echoing words epitomizing the long-lasting gender battle. This expression brings memory back to 1989 when 500,000 women marched together on Washington to manifest in favour of legal abortion.

Barbara Kruger was the artist who created THE poster putting together the unforgettable statement and a woman's face divided in two parts, positive and negative, white and black, light and darkness. The picture symbolizes the conflict not just between public opinion and personal values, but also between contrasting individual certainties, which can't help but fall down while facing a struggling experience such an abortion.

Kruger, born in 1945, started her career as a designer and became a visual artist in the 1970s. Women have always been a matter of concern in her practice. They asymmetrically embody a society, which doesn't value equality principles between male and female. Even more, it doesn't promote the specificity of being a woman as a precious resource.

However, Kruger has never been convinced of drastic oppositions – in her art there is no space for dichotomies between right and wrong, good and evil, linearity and degeneration. We are a whole, a holistic multitude of people who, despite heterogeneous political convictions and personal beliefs, live and communicate in the same space.

Here comes the controversial statement. For Kruger, everybody, and I mean everybody, is involved in consumerist attitudes. Nobody is absolved. And who thinks of himself as an extreme outsider, embodying with his own persona the Alternative to capitalism, oh well, he will have to re-adjust his self-consideration.

As Kruger once sustained, 'If you and I think we are not susceptible to these images, than we are sadly deluded'. Kruger's art has often been considered conceptual due to the irreplaceable importance of the language she uses, refers to, and values as a great method of communication; as a consequence, images are simple, usually in black and white, they don't catalyze too much attention per se. It's the combination between words and pictures, their solid interaction that impresses the viewer…

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. FOR THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT TYCI.ORG.UK. FOR MORE ON KRUGER'S WORK, HEAD TO BARBARAKRUGER.COM.

NAOMI WOLF - WOMAN OF THE WORLD

Words by Maria Moore

I'm a relative newcomer to Naomi Wolf's work – I was barely a baby when her first book, The Beauty Myth, was published and only discovered it at university a few years ago. Still, I find her work as a writer and social critic interesting, and jumped at the chance of seeing her speak at this year's Women of the World festival at the Southbank Centre in London.

Wolf's latest book, Vagina: A New Biography, combines scientific data and cultural history, to examine the connection between female sexuality and creativity. Based on her research, Wolf argues that the vagina is much more than just a sex-organ; it is integral to female confidence, assertiveness, and identity. Jude Kelly, Southbank Centre's Artistic Director, led the conversation and soon she and Wolf were talking about everything from orgasms to equality… It's

fairly unusual for women to talk about masturbation and enjoying sex, in such a public environment, without the likelihood of being shamed, called 'sluts', and told to be quiet because 'girls don't do that, thankyouverymuch'. Yes, we often hear them discussed in a titillating Cosmo-esque way, but it was refreshing to hear Wolf and Kelly give female pleasure importance. It's not just girly gossip, it's serious stuff.

It wasn't that the talk was revolutionary, it was the fact it felt normal that made it so interesting. Listening to Wolf speak, I felt completely comfortable and not a bit embarrassed by any of the subjects discussed. In fact, I wanted to go out and talk about these things with my friends. And I wanted to use the word 'vagina' more. It's strange how in a culture where the word 'dick' is thrown around willy-nilly (pun intended) the mere mention of a word used to describe a woman's sexual anatomy still makes people gasp. Even amongst my group of female friends, we shy away from referring to 'it' at all, and 'cunt' is arguably one of the few words that still elicits outrage from men and women alike…

I'm not suggesting we share all the gory details with anyone who will listen (although if you want to, that's cool too...) but we should stop attaching so much fear to these subjects. Especially pleasure! People are all about talking about bad stuff, but I think we can often be far less open when it comes to the things we enjoy. Talking leads to change, so let's get chatting.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. FOR THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT TYCI.ORG.UK. FOR MORE ON WOMEN OF THE WORLD, VISIT SOUTHBANKCENTRE.CO.UK.

LADY PRODUCERS DON'T SLOW YOUR ROLL

Words by Catriona Reilly

You might remember Peaches back in 2011, eloquently telling DJ Mag to 'eat a dick' in response to their poll of the top 100 DJs which featured not one single female DJ (much like the current artist roster for electronic producer heavy R&S records). More recently, 2012's poll did have some - albeit sparse - female representation in the form of lady duo Nervo polling at number 46)but then again, said poll also placed Skrillex at number 10 so there are questions of credibility…) Regardless of its musical integrity, the poll highlights the fact that electronic music is still a largely male scene, particularly when it comes to electronic producing.

But, despite the Kraftwerkian chimes of patriarchy ringing out across the electronic kingdom, there are some female producers doing a fine job of kicking it behind a computer and here are my five current favourites.

HOLLY HERNDON

A wee while back on the TYCI blog, I dropped props on lady producer by the name of Fatima Al Qadiri. So, at the risk of appearing somewhat obsessed I will leave her out of this list, but instead offer Holly Herndon in her place. Holly uses similar techniques to Fatima, sampling and warping her own voice creating off-kilter, tactile electronic music. Basically, Holly's music sounds like what I'd imagine making post-physical mind-love to a computer would sound like or more succinctly; futuristic.

Holly Herndon

SYD DA KID (AKA SYDNEY BENNETT)

As the only female member of controversial alt-hip-hop collective Odd Future Syd Da Kid is doing a fine job of holding it down as both their producer and as one half of splinter duo, The Internet. However, she is a controversial choice. Syd upset many a feminist as well as the lesbian community (don't even mentioned the feminist lesbians) with The Internet's video for Cocaine which features Syd dumping a coke addled lady lover on the kerb before driving off. She didn't help matters by following this with some choice misogynistic comments about slapping bitches. But, while she may not become super best friends with Kathleen Hanna anytime soon, she's still steady mobbing within a hyper-male environment, crafting distinctively lush beats and keeping the Wolf Gang rolling.

MAYA JANE COLES

Maya has become ubiquitous to these lists and rightly so. The producer / DJ / sound engineer primarily produces house music but also dubstep under the moniker Nocturnal Sunshine and a little bit of electrodub alongside vocalist Lena Cullen in She Is Danger. She was voted Best British producer in 2011 and awarded best British Compilation Album for her DJ Kicks in 2012 by the aforementioned DJ Mag, making her the only female musician to have ever appeared in the magazine's Best of British selection. Her talent, which has expanded to include remixes of artists such as Tricky and The Orb, has taken her all over the world, playing clubs and festivals including Berlin's Watergate and the UK's Glastonbury festival.

Maya Jane Coles

Hype Williams

syd da Kid

INGA COPELAND (AKA KAREN GLASS)

Inga operates as one half of Hype Williams, Inga Copeland & Dean Blunt, and just straight up Inga Copeland. She's a lady with her fingers in many pies, or on many keyboards if you want to be literal. As one side of Hype Williams, she creates lo-fi electronic collages which sound like the VHS taped soundtrack to an educational science video from the 80s. As a solo artist she carries over this aesthetic but weaves in her distinctive voice to creating a more refined and coherent electronic backdrop resulting in tenderly warped dub pop. If all those adjectives don't make you want to listen then you're a damn fool.

ASMA MAROOF

Asma is 0.5 of NGUZUNGUZU along with Daniel Pineda, which in itself is worthy of respect, few electronic artists receive quite so much hype as NGUZUNGUZU. When she's not rolling with Daniel, Asma DJs under her own name, collaborates with other artists as Nguzu and when she's got the time both produces and DJs for M.I.A on tour. But the really impressive thing about Asma is her unique musical style. She takes a range of genres from Juke to Reggaeton and chops them up, throws in a mix of hyper futuristic bass, refined synth and snaking loops all topped off with some screwed R&B vocal samples creating some damn fine delicious global future bass.

Nguzungazu

Of course, this list is just a minute selection of female producers with some obvious omissions including Ellen Alien, Ikonika, Cooly G and Nina Kraviz to name but a few and, despite all the initial gloom of this article, there are new female producers popping up all the time. Things are changing, slowly.

Having said that, I gotta drop a caveat - categorising producers by gender is wrong. Unless they're using extremely unorthodox production methods, gender shouldn't matter when it comes to making music. But, then again, would I include these ladies on my list of favourites from both genders? A big hell yes.

AULD REEKIE ROLLER GIRLS

Interview by Lauren Mayberry

Think Whip It told you everything you needed to know about roller derby? Think again. TYCI chats to Sasha de Buyl-Pisco from Auld Reekie Roller Girls.

SO, FOR ANYONE WHO DOESN'T YET KNOW, WHAT IS ROLLER DERBY?

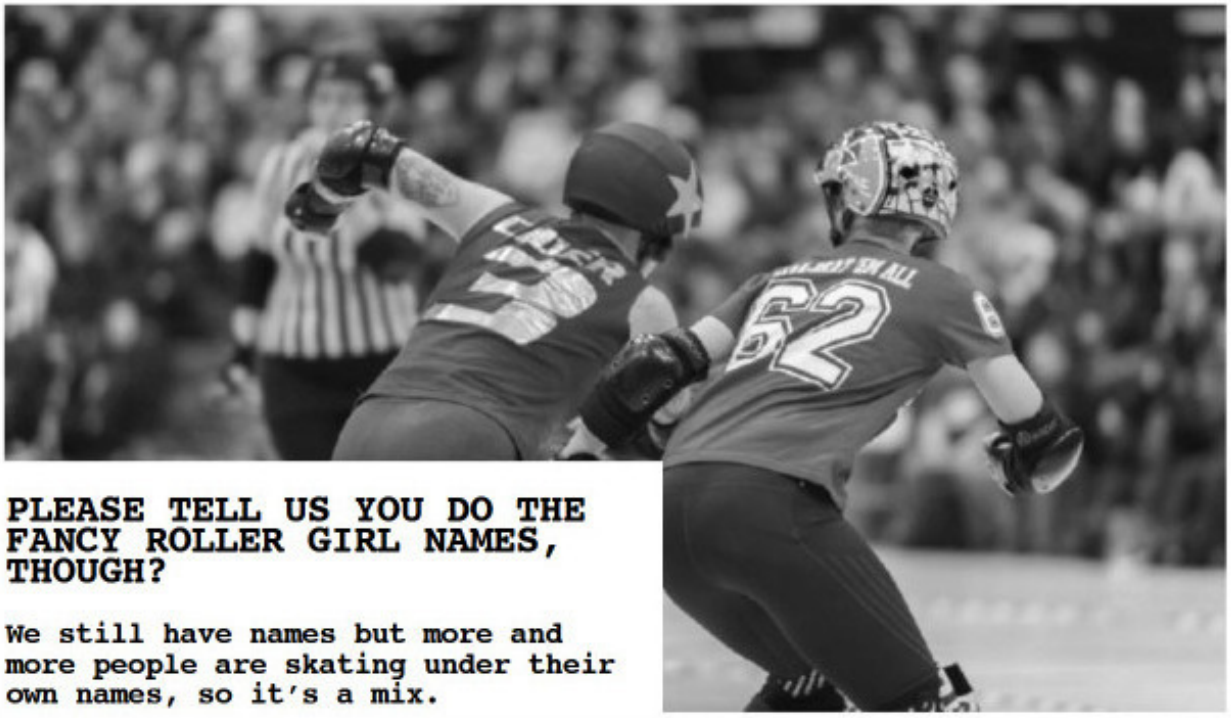
Roller derby is a full contact sport played primarily by women and the objective is to work together, playing in a pack, to get one of your players who has a star in their hand past members of the opposing team. You get points for every member of the opposite team you pass. It's kind of a tactical race but it is full contact, so the other team are allowed to get in your way. They're allowed to hit you and hold you back. Auld Reekie Roller Girls are a roller derby league based in Edinburgh.

DO YOU PLAY IN A SCOTTISH LEAGUE, OR IS IT BROKEN DOWN MORE SPECIFICALLY THAN THAT?

The way that leagues were set up in the UK is quite different from other sports. Each team calls themselves a 'league', even though they interact with other ones. We have a small Edinburgh based league with three intra-league teams who all play each other. Then in around March until December we have two travel teams who play other teams around the UK and Europe. That's turning into a proper league system. In America, they have proper rankings and league systems.

MOST OF WHAT I KNOW ABOUT ROLLER DERBY I LEARNED FROM WHIP IT. IS THAT AN ACCURATE DEPICTION OF ROLLER DERBY AS YOU KNOW IT?

The thing about Whip It is that it's a very different kind of roller derby being played in the film with a very different set of rules and the play is very different, because their track is tilted so it takes a different set of skills. Those tracks cost about £10,000 so that's why flat track roller derby has become so popular – you can practice anywhere that has a sports hall, rather than having to have a specific and expensive track built and taken down every time you want to play a game. On top of that, the showmanship and the exhibitionism in Whip It is a little bit played up and isn't something we do. We view it as more of a serious sport.



PLEASE TELL US YOU DO THE FANCY ROLLER GIRL NAMES, THOUGH?

We still have names but more and more people are skating under their own names, so it's a mix.

FOR ANY TYCI READERS WHO WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN ROLLER DERBY – HOW WOULD THEY GO ABOUT THIS?

There are loads of ways to get involved. Even if you can't skate, you can still get involved. If you want to skate, you can sign up for one of our New Skater Sundays which happen once every three months or so and you can find details on our website about how to sign up - arrg.co.uk. You can also get involved as an official or a referee if you are a guy or don't want to take part in the actual sport itself. You can also come down to one of our games, details of which are all on the website too. We do require everyone to own their own kit as it's quite pricey and hard to get hold of, so to make sure people are serious about it, we require them to buy their gear in advance.

WHAT KIND OF GEAR DO YOU NEED?

You need quad roller skates – no roller blades –, a helmet, knee pads, elbow pads and a mouth guard. When you put it all on, you feel a bit bionic. You can roll around worry free.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD ANY DERBY INJURIES?

About two years ago, I tore the cartilage in my knee. Not the most serious injury in the word – it heals and with physio it's fine now. It took me off my skates for about three months and then, a year later, I had some recurring problems and had to take time off again.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF BEING INVOLVED WITH AULD REEKIE ROLLER GIRLS?

There's something about being with a massive group of women who come from totally different paths of life and parts of the world with totally different backgrounds, but they all get together and find a common ground. You have such a massive laugh – it's so fun. I didn't have that many female friends before I found roller derby. And also getting to hit people whilst on roller skates is quite fun too…

FOR DATES OF UPCOMING GAMES AND DETAILS OF HOW TO GET INVOLVED, HEAD TO ARRG.CO.UK.

Porn For All Persuasions, Please

Words by Victoria Scott

As one of my favourite women in the world said to me once, 'Porn is not about feminism. Feminism is about being in charge. Women who watch porn are in charge of their sexuality.' As true as this statement is, it would be safe to assume that the majority of women are uncomfortable with the image of pornography in today's society, being seemingly completely unrelated to a sexual encounter in real life. We want to engage with a storyline, admire scenery, and be seduced by the characters. We do not want an up close view of some poor girl being blinded by a gallon of sperm after being 'face-fucked' on 1970s bed sheets. However, porn made specifically for women is on the rise, due to an increasing awareness of female sexual independence, and the problem of gender stereotyping in mass media.

"Porn is all about maths, to fuel the imagination in the most base sense."

The porn industry has been a male dominated environment since... well, since forever. From male directors catering for male needs, to an audience of male majority, it is hard not to feel like an intruder as a woman watching porn. Like stepping in on someone mid wank, porn is so tailored for the repressed desires of modern men that women cannot help but feel left out, almost neglected by the entire entity that is pornography. This is not to blame men as a whole, but to question what it is about women that makes us more complex to cater for.

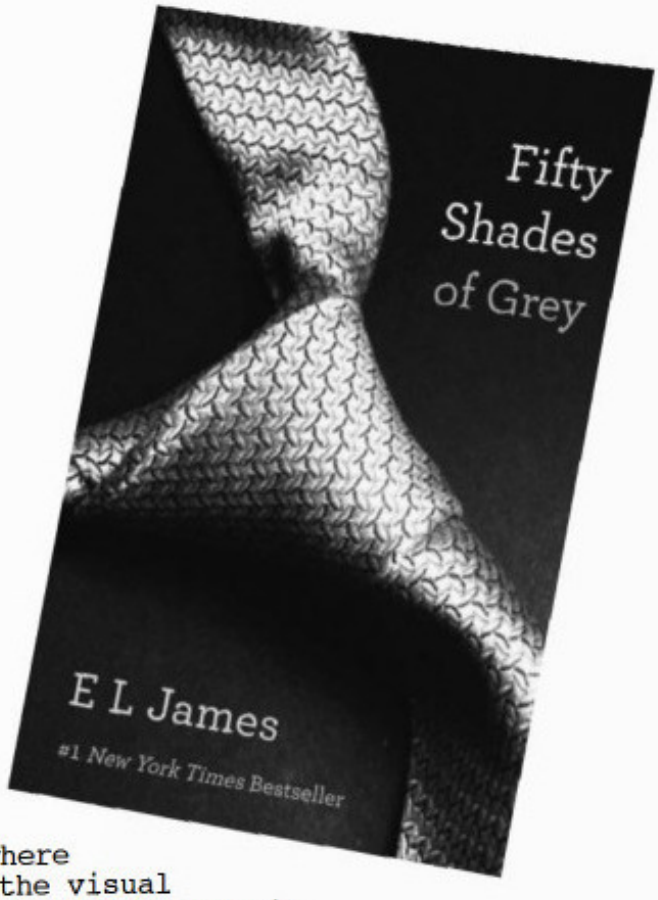
Unable to engage with falsetto orgasms and fake boobs, women have found themselves turning to erotic fiction, from Lady Chatterly's Lover to Scruples and E.L James' popular (and ludicrous) Fifty Shades of Grey, sexy literature has replaced the void that pornography should have be filling for decades. But with increasing awareness of the lack of porn for women, directors such as Ericka Lust and Anna Span have taken it upon themselves to make women happy. From theatrical fantasies, to sadomasochism to regular vanilla

sex, these pioneers of porno are addressing the gap in the industry. Sites like I Shot Myself and Pussy Les Queer reveal a growing interest in the artistic possibilities of sexy sites with a female prerogative.

Porn is all about maths, to fuel the imagination in the most base sense. Porn is all about the male climax - the visual confirmation of ejaculation is like a full stop at the end of a sentence. As Milan Kundera wrote, 'The religion of orgasm; utilitarianism projected into sex life; efficiency versus indolence; coition reduced to an obstacle to be got past as quickly as possible in order to reach an ecstatic explosion...'

"Women really want to believe in the sex, and this is where the visual foreplay comes in."

Porn is a desensitisation of the true nature of sex, wherein one would be concerned for the desires of the other person. Porn is self indulgence. Porn glorifies preconceived ideals of masculinity with amplified gender role play, and this stands for porn watched by both men and women. Unfortunately, such criteria for pornography allows a subjugation of women in cheap hotel rooms with nylon carpets and dodgy lighting, a visual culture pursued the world over, constructing false impressions about sexuality, body hair, intimacy and the most importantly, the female orgasm. This is what most concerns me, and the women I interviewed before writing this article. Orgasms. We cannot relate to a sex scene wherein a women comes in the first two minutes. It just doesn't happen like that, and unlike (most) men, we can tell when women are faking. Not just the obvious and ear-drum puncturing screamers, but the quieter, more subtle fakery too, and this undermines the whole experience. Women really want to believe in the sex, and this is



where the visual foreplay comes in. There is nothing like a heated build up to get a girl interested in erotica, whether it be in literature or on the screen. With all this bring brought to the attention of the sex industry, websites such as joymii.com and femjoy.com have begun to gain popularity, upturning our usual expectations of sex on screen.

By focusing on what women want and giving porn an element of realism with artful twists, directors have been able to tailor sexy films to not only the needs of the modern woman, but all genders and sexual persuasions. As Guardian columnist Fern Brady wrote, 'Instead of being squeamish and reluctant to discuss porn, it would be more productive if people could focus on asking why there isn't more readily available porn that caters to all sexes and, crucially, understand why this is important in reflecting gender equality.'

Although such porn risks being undermined by a mist of soft focus and relaxing music, it certainly shows the steps being taken to revolutionise porn for everyone.

Q&A: HELEN MARNIE OF LADYTRON

Interview by Lauren Mayberry

YOU'RE WORKING ON YOUR FIRST SOLO ALBUM JUST NOW. WHERE ARE YOU AT WITH THAT?

I'm kind of behind where I should be. I'm a bit pissed off since I thought I'd be further along by now. I'm actually doing a Pledge Music campaign to raise funds and get the record out there as it's obviously a very expensive process, but I hope people aren't too upset when they hear they'll have to wait a little bit longer. GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO WAIT…Hopefully so. I just

TELL US A BIT ABOUT THE ALBUM.

It's quite broad but plays on the themes of 'the elements', implied and used in ways throughout the album. I would say it's quite pop – way more so than Ladytron, but I wanted it like that. I feel like I'm often the most pop element in Ladytron. As for titles, I'm not sure how much you're meant to give away…

SOME PEOPLE TELL YOU NOTHING, SO DON'T FEEL FORCED. WE'RE NOT THAT KIND OF OUTFIT…

No, it's OK! There's a song called Submariner, which is very personal and emotional to me. Hearts On Fire is another exclusive too.

WILL LADYTRON BE BACK AT ANY POINT?

Yes, definitely. That was a worry for the rest of the band when I decided to do the solo album – that people would think we're splitting up, so I've tried to stress all along the way that we're still together. We're just taking a year out to do things. We're all moving around – I've moved here, one guy is in America, one guys has moved to Brazil, so we're just using that time to take a step back before making a new album.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE RISE IN POPULARITY OF NEW FEMALE-FRONTED ELECTRO ACTS LIKE GRIMES AND AUSTRA?

I think it's great. I'm all for more girls doing it. When we first started doing it, there wasn't very many girls on the scene, especially in electronic acts. When Ladytron first started out, it was mostly indie guitar bands in Liverpool so we were quite unusual in that we were electronic, as well as having two girls fronting it which was very unusual at the time.

DO YOU THINK THAT THE MUSIC INDUSTRY IS A BIT OF A BOY'S CLUB?

I'm not sure that's so true now. Yes, the majority of bands are boys and fronted by guys but behind the scenes, there's a lot of women writing for people, and a lot of the bigger acts like Christina Aguilera and Katy Perry are women who have a lot of influence. Occasionally yeah, you'll meet an arsehole, but generally if people think you're making good music, they want to be a part of that. I've never had any problems in the industry just because of the fact that I am a girl.

THAT'S GOOD NEWS. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO PEOPLE WANTING TO PROGRESS IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY?

It's hard because at the moment it's quite saturated. I'm always quite embarrassed when I meet new people and they ask me what I do and I say, "I'm in a band". I feel like the must be rolling their eyes – or maybe it's me who's rolling my eyes, because it seems like everyone is in a band now. Nowadays, it's all so accessible that you can do it yourself. If you've got a laptop and some software, then you should be able to produce something to a standard where it can be heard by other people in demo form.

When Ladytron first started, we didn't go down the conventional route. We didn't do any gigs at all. We made all the music and then got airplay on Steve Lamacq and John Peel and that's how we got noticed. I'm not sure if that's how it would happen now but I always felt like a lot of bands just gigged constantly in pubs but weren't getting any exposure outside of that. You need to send your music to people who are in a position to play it. Gigging obviously gets you into a position, once you have been noticed, to have all your stuff together and play it but it doesn't necessarily get you out there, so I would approach things like radio and get a manager.

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TYCI ON SUBCITY RADIO

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Subcity Radio

TYCI is a collective run by women.
We have a website where we write about things which affect us and put together features on art, theatre, music, film, politics, current affairs and most things in between. We also talk about similar stuff on our monthly radio show on Subcity.

This zine is a collection of some of the content from our site and is distributed in conjunction with our monthly live event at Bloc.

If you would like to get involved, reply to any of our articles or just generally say hi, hit us up on contact.tyci@gmail.com or visit tyci.org.uk.

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